

**From:** Scott Rarden  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/10/02 8:47pm  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement Comments

I would like to respectfully give my comments on the settlement process in the Microsoft monopoly decision.

Microsoft is trying to turn this decision from something that is a punishment into something that is a gift. With as large as the cash reserves of this company are, especially in these troubled economic times, it would have no problem paying the complete fine in cash. Instead it has offered to provide free software to the educational system.

This accomplishes three things for Microsoft. The first is that it, even if the product was only valued at cost rather than full retail, allows the company to avoid the full cost of the settlement. Given the choice between parting with cash or offering to provide copies of something they have already produced -- they would have to be insane to pick the cash. The second thing is that it allows them to grasp more of the education desktop market...the only remaining desktop market that they do not have monopoly power in. This settlement would 'punish' their abuse of monopoly power by giving them the opportunity to increase their monopoly. The third thing is that it allows them to look noble for offering to 'help' the poorer schools in the nation -- when it obviously is a cynical attempt to avoid taking responsibility for breaking the law while at the same time expanding the very power that led them to break the law in the first place.

I plead with you to not approve the settlement plan that Microsoft has offered. It would be against reason and justice, and would only encourage them to maintain the same practices that they have been found guilty of.

Thank you for your time, and the IT community awaits your decision for good or ill.

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